



African Union
GWCI A XIV
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Chair: Jessica Thompson

Vice Chair: Chris Granger

Co-Crisis Director: Bobby Fraser

Co-Crisis Director: Kiran
Natarajan

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Dear Delegates,

Greetings and welcome to the African Union (AU) committee of GWCI A XIV! My name is Jessica Thompson and I will be the chairwoman for this committee. I am a senior at The George Washington University studying international affairs and French language and literature. I grew up in Geneva, Switzerland and studied abroad last year in West Africa and Southeast Asia. I am very excited about this year's conference and I look forward to meeting you all and working with you to make our committee's debate interesting and fruitful.

The topic that the AU will be addressing is the crisis situation in Somalia, in specific regard to the issue of factionalism. The situation in Somalia is very complex, but I believe that you have been provided with a few specified subject areas that will allow our debate to be focused and effective. The civil war in Somalia is a longstanding conflict that has prevented the existence of a viable governing structure for almost two decades. Our committee's topic is extremely relevant in light of present-day Somalia seeing as the high levels of divisive factionalism in Somali politics and society threaten the existence of the country as a whole.

While my expectations for our committee's level of decorum and flow of debate should be understood and respected by all delegates, I recognize that there may be varying levels of experience among the participants. Respect is a key priority for our committee sessions. I expect all delegates to respect one another, themselves, and the topic at hand. As our actual time spent in committee is quite limited, I encourage you all to concentrate on negotiating with one another, building consensus, and striving to create innovative solutions. While it is important to represent your country's interests and defend your position on any given issue, there is much room for compromise in the African Union and I hope that our committee can reach strong agreements.

I hope you will find the attached background guide a useful beginning to your research for the conference. It outlines the background of the conflict, the obstacles in the way of political unity, the role of factionalism in perpetuating the conflict, and the measures that have been taken thus far by the African Union and international community to try to resolve the tensions. I of course welcome other ideas and suggestions delegates would like to discuss during our committee sessions and if you have any questions or concerns about the background guide or the general topic, do not hesitate to contact me via email prior to the conference.

It is important to direct your research efforts towards gathering information about your particular country, its political and historical relations with Somalia, and its involvement in conflicts that may reveal how your country chooses to respond to unstable, militant situations. I am confident that our committee will be full of captivating debate and opportunities for each one of you to contribute. Thank you in advance for all your hard work and good luck with your research!

Sincerely,

Jessica Thompson
Chairwoman- African Union
jmt16@gwu.edu



African Union

Introduction to the African Union

Attempts to unify the states of Africa made during the mid-twentieth century wave of independence included the creation of Union of African States in the 1960s, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, and the African Economic Community in 1981. Many of the OAU's main objectives were directly related to supporting the struggles for independence that were occurring across the continent. The OAU was widely criticized for its shortcomings, however, which included the failure of the organization to protect the human rights of African citizens. In September 1999 the heads of state and government of the member nations of the OAU called for the creation of an African Union (AU) in the Sirte Declaration. Finally in July 2002 at Durban, South Africa, the AU was formally established.ⁱ

Today, the AU has a number of broad objectives, such as building effective partnerships between government and civil society, promoting peace and stability, encouraging democratic governance, and working towards sustainable development.ⁱⁱ The AU monitors the severity of military conflicts on the continent and has been known to intervene when it feels necessary, such as in the cases of Darfur and Somalia. In theory a system of peer review exists within the AU that provides for checks on individual states by their fellow member nations to ensure principles of democratic governance and just economic policies are being followed. However, the dictatorial nature of many member states and the lack of political will to hold the individual members of the AU accountable to the larger organization render the success of this peer review scheme limited.ⁱⁱⁱ



The AU currently has 53 members and is headquartered in Addis Abba, Ethiopia. The most important decision-making body of the African Union is the Assembly, comprised on the heads of state and government of the member states. The Executive Council, constituted of the ministers of foreign affairs of the member states, submits proposals on issues such as foreign trade, agriculture, and social security to the Assembly for review. The Commission is a ten-member group that works as the secretariat of the AU.^{iv} In 2005 the AU decided to integrate the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court of the Justice to form the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.^v

Background of Somali Independence

Prior to European colonial expeditions in the Horn of Africa where

present-day Somalia is situated, the Somali people were predominantly nomadic pastoralists. To this day, the social and political structures of Somali society are based around clans, or extended families and lineages.

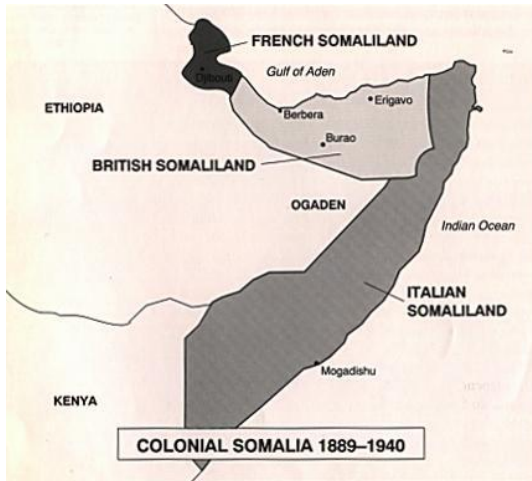
Although Somalia is often seen a homogenous state in terms of ethnicity and language, intricate economic, cultural and linguistic differences exist between the North and South, rendering an analysis of the contemporary conflict and societal divisions more difficult.^{vi}

Due to its strategic coastline bordering the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, Somalia attracted the interest of several European colonial powers. In the mid-19th century Great Britain, France and Italy began using Somali territory as coaling facilities for their ships en route to India. The French, British, Italians and Ethiopians divided and often fought over the territory that today comprises



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Somalia, Djibouti, and Eritrea during the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.^{vii}



After World War II Ethiopia controlled the Somali regions of Ogaden and the Haud, British and French Somaliland existed as before, and Italy was allowed to return under a United Nations trusteeship that promised to bring Somalia to independence within ten years. In 1960 the British and Italian colonies formed the independent Somali Republic.^{viii} Many historians and political analysts trace the root causes of the civil war in Somalia to the quick, poorly planned union of Somalia in 1960. The North and South were not

properly integrated in a way that ensured economic and political cooperation.

The Barre Regime

The Somali Republic was plagued with instability from its beginning. A major political concern from the outset of independence was the desire to reunite Somali populations in French Somaliland, Ethiopia (in the regions of Ogaden and the Haud) and in northern Kenya within the framework of the Somali state. Nevertheless, during the first several years of independence, Somalia remained fairly uninvolved in international relations.^{ix} The poor integration of the Northern and Southern regions of the country resulted in failed development policies, leaving much of the North faced with grave issues of underdevelopment. Additionally, the “unified” Somali government was very



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corrupt and the majority of Northerners were very dissatisfied with the mounting political power of the Southern clan families, namely the Hawiye and the Darod.^x

By the time of the 1969 elections, political differences across Somalia's diverse regions had created more than 60 political parties, indicating that political unity had not been achieved in the nine years since independence.^{xi} The leadership of the country imposed brutal, authoritarian rule until in October 1969 the president Ali Shermaake was assassinated by his bodyguard. The army then staged a coup d'etat to overthrow the remaining members of the government and established control over the capitol, Mogadishu. Major General Mohammed Siad Barre assumed control of government as the head of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC). He immediately abolished the National

Assembly (legislative body of government), suspended the constitution, forbid all political parties and set up the National Security Courts (NSC) to act as a watchdog for counterrevolutionaries.^{xii}

A major feature of Barre's policies and an appeal of his initial popularity was his commitment to rid Somalia of competing clan affiliations that had troubled politics since the country's independence.^{xiii} Barre's regime undertook a massive propaganda campaign aimed at destroying tribalism and converting the Somali people to his political ideology. In the mid-1970s Barre's socialist policies brought about a famine in Somalia that resulted in over 20,000 deaths and 15% of the population to be forced to relocate to relief camps.^{xiv} In 1977 the emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie was deposed and Barre, with Soviet support, launched an attack to retake the Ogaden and the



Haud regions. Over half a million refugees poured in Northern Somalia from the Ogaden, which put an intense strain on the country's already limited resources.^{xv} Barre began to face heightened opposition from forces within Somalia demanding increased personal and political freedoms. In the early 1980s a group of Somali intellectuals, businessmen and religious leaders who primarily belonged to the Issaq clan of the North created the Somali National Movement (SNM) in London in opposition to Barre. Barre's security forces carried out brutal attacks on members of numerous clans and many aid organizations, including the United Nations, claimed that Barre's actions amounted to genocide.^{xvi} By 1988 Somalia was engaged in a full-fledged civil war and Barre was eventually overthrown in January 1991 after a month of fighting in Mogadishu

between his forces and opposition parties.^{xvii}

The 1990s and Onwards

After Barre was removed from power, numerous political parties with no unified ideology existed in Somalia. The United Somalia Congress (USC) dominated by the Hawiye clan of south and central Somalia had provided the military force to overthrow Barre and thus declared themselves as an interim government following the coup. Other groups did not support the USC's assumed control and internal fighting within the USC caused it to split into two groups. The two groups turned the capital city, Mogadishu, into a war zone while the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the North refused the USC takeover and declared itself in charge of local governance. In 1991 the former British Somaliland declared itself independent from the Somali Republic.



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Fighting worsened in Somalia as no central government was established and the humanitarian toll taken on the Somali people was extreme: mass killings, rape, the destruction of property and livelihoods, and destruction of land belonging to minority clans were frequent occurrences.^{xviii}

Although the international community had for many years monitored the situation in Somalia from afar, in April 1992 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 751, which established the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I). UNOSOM I was aimed to protect humanitarian organizations that were trying to deliver food and other necessities to the ever-growing number of refugees. In December 1992 the Security Council created a US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) under Resolution 794 due to the shortcomings of the UNOSOM I

mission to provide security for the delivery of food aid. The mission, under the name of Operation Restore Hope, was comprised of 28,000 troops. In January 1993 US forces and UN officials facilitated the signing of a cease-fire between fourteen of the leading factions. Because no disarmament process was implemented, however, the agreement failed. When UNITAF's mission ended in May 1993 the Security Council created UNOSOM 2 to integrate the well-armed troops from UNITAF with the Pakistani peacekeepers from UNOSOM I. UNOSOM 2 suffered from an overextended mandate and ultimately failed in its efforts to bring about disarmament, a lasting ceasefire, and the reconstruction of the Somali nation. The last UNOSOM 2 forces were withdrawn from Mogadishu in March 1995.^{xix}

During the remainder of the 1990s inter-clan fighting continued across



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Somalia, worsening the humanitarian situation by increasing the number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Many of the most affected persons came from the country's ethnic minorities who were continually discriminated against by the more powerful clans. In 1998 the area of Puntland, which contains 1/3 of the Somali population and 1/3 of the country's territory, declared its independence from Somalia, indicating that the solution for some to the lack of a central government was simply to secede and form their own nation. After several failed attempts at convening peace conferences in the 1990s, in May 2000 Djibouti held the Somali National Peace Conference which created the Transitional National Government (TNG) that included a 245 member Transitional National Assembly based

on proportional representation of the clans.^{xx}

The TNG had a three-year interim mandate but largely lacked the respect and recognition necessary to function effectively. However, many if not all of the leaders of opposition parties lacked a clear, political vision for Somalia, rendering their contributions to the peace process all the more difficult. From 2002-2004 the regional Intergovernmental Agency for Development held the National Reconciliation Conference in Kenya to address the shortcomings of the TNG. These talks produced the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), headed by interim president Abdullahi Ysuf Ahmed, and the Transitional National Charter.^{xxi} The TFG is the fourteenth attempt to establish a government since Barre's removal in 1991.



Although the TFG relocated to Somalia from Kenya in 2005, the heavily militant Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) took control of Mogadishu in May 2005. In December 2006, after over a year of controlling the capitol city and much of the South, the UIC was driven out of Mogadishu by a joint military operation by Ethiopia and Somali government forces. By late 2008, however, the Al-Shabab group, which the United States believed to be linked to Al-Qaeda, had regained much of southern Somalia from the Ethiopian and Somali troops. In January 2009 Ethiopia withdrew its troops from Somalia and the TFG swore in 149 new parliamentary members from a major opposition movement, the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia.^{xxii}

Current Status and Prospects

Since the fall of Barre in 1991, the death toll from fighting in Somalia has

exceeded 300,000 persons. Hundreds of thousands more have been uprooted from their homes and struggles to survive in over-burdened refugee camps.^{xxiii} It is estimated that today 3.76 million people, half of the Somali population, are in need of humanitarian aid, and 75% of these people are in areas virtually inaccessible to aid organizations because of heavy fighting.^{xxiv} Generations of Somali people have never known stability in their country and for over fifteen years Somalia has been without a fully recognized and effective government. The fragile transitional government is desperate for more foreign assistance to help fight the Islamist radicals, but many in the international community see Somalia as a failed state, engaged in a tragic war that cannot be won. At present, the leading factions of the conflict—the moderate Islamist



government, the radical Al-Shabab militants (rumored to be supported by the neighboring Eritrea), the various clan militias, and the autonomous governments of Somaliland and Puntland—are unwilling to work towards a lasting compromise and none of them are strong enough or popular enough to take control of the country. Although the United Nations and Western countries support the transitional government, it ultimately does not have enough power in Somalia to eliminate its radical opponents.^{xxv} Interestingly enough, although outside of the influence of the TFG, the areas of Somalia under control of the Islamist militants and the autonomous region of Somaliland often enjoy relative stability, due to the fact that there is at least some form of order and governance, despite its legitimacy.^{xxvi}

The Al-Shabab militants are one of the strongest opposition forces and they currently have hundreds of foreign recruits fighting for their cause. But they lack a forceful, convincing ideology, which many see as an indicator of their inevitable downfall.^{xxvii} A major international media focus on Somalia in the past several years has been directed toward the threat of Somali pirates to international shipping. Formerly fighters for the various warring factions in Somalia, the pirates that operate off the coast of the Gulf of Aden make huge profits in capturing ships from all over the world and demanding ransoms. Although NATO has taken up the patrol of the 1.1 million square miles of pirate territory, the pirates are still largely successful in their illicit operations and many believe a regional solution could be more effective.^{xxviii}

The Role of the African Union



While the crisis in Somalia directly impacts neighboring countries, such as Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya from a security and refugee standpoint, the ongoing civil war and the lack of a potential, viable solution in Somalia is ultimately a concern for all of the AU. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) has been active since 2007 in trying to establish peace and security in the absence of the Ethiopian forces. It is important that the African Union help its member nations establish and maintain peace, but the situation in Somalia has been so violent in recent years that the AU has been hesitant to increase its number of troops in AMISOM.^{xxix} The AU has a responsibility not only to ensure that one of its members does not end up as a failed state with no government whatsoever, but it also must protect

Somalia's neighboring countries from being exceedingly affected by the crisis.

Questions to Consider

Considering the numerous factions involved in the Somali civil war, how can an effective solution be achieved that will satisfy the interests of all of the groups?

How can the AU work with humanitarian organizations, NATO, and other international bodies to bring about peace and stability in Somalia?

What characteristics must the transitional government in Somalia have to be seen as legitimate by all of the people of Somalia?

How can the autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland be reintegrated into the Republic of Somalia?

How can an effective ceasefire and disarmament process be established in Somalia?

What can be done to help the millions of refugees and displaced persons that desperately need humanitarian assistance?

Helpful Websites

AMISOM: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/AUC/Departments/PS/AMISOM/amisom.htm>

AU: <http://www.africa-union.org/>

Timeline of Events:



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1072611.stm>

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2009/01/2009126212443542421.html>

History of Somalia:

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Somalia/Politics.html>

Other sites:

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1232>

<http://www.rastafarispeaks.com/somalia/>

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85681>

ⁱ The African Union,
<http://www.africaaction.org/resources/issues/au.php>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Transition from the OAU to the African Union,
http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/background/oau_to_au.htm.

^v ASIL Insight: “The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights”,
<http://www.asil.org/insights/2006/09/insights060919.html>.

^{vi} Ismail I Ahmed and Reginald Herbold Green. *The Heritage of War ad State Collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-Level Effects, External Interventions and Reconstruction*. Third World Quarterly 20.1: February 1999.

^{vii} History of Somalia,
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Ahmed and Green.

^{xi} History of Somalia,

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

^{xii} Somalia: History and Politics,

<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Somalia/Politics.html>

^{xiii} Ibid.

^{xiv} Ahmed and Green.

^{xv} Somalia: History and Politics

^{xvi} Ibid.

^{xvii} History of Somalia

^{xviii} Ibid.

^{xix} Ibid.

^{xx} Ibid.

^{xxi} Ibid.

^{xxii} Country Profile: Somalia,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm

^{xxiii} Civil War since 1991,

<http://www.france24.com/france24Public/en/special-reports/20070105-somalia.php>

^{xxiv} Somalia: Humanitarian situation

“worst in 18 years”,

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=85843>

^{xxv} No Winner Seen in Somalia’s Battle With Chaos,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/world/africa/02somalia.html>

^{xxvi} Country Profile: Somalia

^{xxvii} Ibid.

^{xxviii} Who are Somalia’s pirates?,

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1120/p25s22-woaf.html>

^{xxix} African Union to send more troops to Somalia,

http://www.boston.com/news/world/africa/articles/2009/03/28/african_union_to_send_more_troops_to_somalia/

